

2 July 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

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FROM: [REDACTED], OTR/IS/OBF

SUBJECT: Vietnam Area Course No. 4-68

1. Basic Data

With 49 persons completing this 4th running of the Vietnam Area Course, this was the largest of the 4 classes held to date; previous sessions numbered, beginning with the initial offering, 36, 35, and 24. The class was held at Headquarters, 10-14 June 1968.

2. Location of Class

The first day of the course was conducted in the Auditorium, and the remainder in G-A-13. Normally I would not assign a special paragraph to this fact; however, I do wish to point out that originally the class was scheduled to be held in the Auditorium on the 1st and the last days. Obviously, shuttling between that plush but cavernous setting and G-A-13 could hardly be considered appealing. When I inquired about other Headquarters facilities, I ran into that curious but apparently unassailable priority of the COS Seminar, wherever room space at Headquarters is an issue. That 49 persons were to be shuttled, rather than the 14 in the Seminar, was apparently irrelevant. By dint of much negotiation, I managed to work out the arrangement noted at the outset of this paragraph.

3. Change in Schedule

Only one change was necessary: [REDACTED] because of TDY in Saigon, was replaced by Mr. Paul [REDACTED], who is also in VASRAC - the Vietnamese Affairs Staff Related Activities Center.

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4. Highlight

If audience reaction means anything, certainly Mr. Dolf Droge of the White House's Vietnam Information Group is the most effective speaker I have ever had in these Vietnam courses. He surely was in this running of the VAC. A man of large frame, with a resounding voice, and a fund of original wit, he has a veritable genius for describing the Vietnamese difficulty in understanding "the inscrutable American." This turning of the tables makes for constructive introspection worthy of the best the behavioral sciences could offer, though Droge himself is a USIA press and radio man with considerable Far East Experience.

5. Critiques

The only new item in the critiques this time was a note of pessimism verging on hopelessness as far as the outlook in Vietnam is concerned. Four or five students wrote lines of dismay at the prospects. I checked through earlier VAC critiques and did not find this note sounded. One or two of the speakers, especially [REDACTED] the Agency's professional pessimist and also long-time and genuine Vietnam expert, did strike a gloomy note. I am a little surprised that this phenomenon appeared now rather than closer to the Tet offensive. Looking ahead a bit, I might say that some balancing of this pessimism was achieved, and honestly so, in a few of the lectures in the Vietnam Station Orientation, which ran the following week.

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Course Chairman

Chief, Intelligence School

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